



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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DEFENDANTS WHO EMBEZZLED SOCIAL SECURITY CHECKS BOUND FOR BENEFICIARIES IN MEXICO SENTENCED AND ORDERED TO PAY RESTITUTION

PHOENIX – Alfonso Julio Ojeda-Madero, 33, of Tucson, Ariz. and Louis Curiel, III, 49, of Goodyear, Ariz. were sentenced here yesterday by U.S. District Judge Frederick J. Martone. The two were sentenced for their roles in obtaining from middlemen nearly \$1,000,000 in stolen social security checks in Mexico and processing those checks for personal gain through banks in Arizona.

Ojeda-Madero, who pleaded guilty to possession of stolen mail, was sentenced to 15 months in federal prison. Curiel, who returned over \$200,000 in proceeds to law enforcement officials before he was charged and who had pleaded guilty to conspiring with Ojeda-Madero to convert government funds, was sentenced to probation. Each defendant is jointly responsible for restitution payments of \$622,212.42 to an Arizona bank and \$104,475.07 to the Social Security Administration.

Ojeda-Madero and Curiel had worked together between January 2002 and January 2003. Ojeda-Madero, through his financial services company in Mexico, acquired social security checks payable to beneficiaries in Mexico and sent them to Curiel in Arizona for deposit in a corporate account Curiel had established at an Arizona bank. Although Curiel and Ojeda began to receive chargeback notices from the bank indicating that some of the deposited checks had been forged, they continued to acquire and deposit third-party social security checks. In December 2002 they switched to a different Arizona bank and the scheme culminated in an unsuccessful attempt to convert a six-figure corporate tax refund check which Ojeda-Madero had obtained.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Social Security Administration (Office of Inspector General), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the U.S. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration. The prosecution was handled by Gary Restaino and Paul Rood, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-191-PHX-FJM
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